

24.02: Moral Problems and the Good Life
Prof. Sally Haslanger
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First Argument Analysis Exercise

Write 2-3 pages providing an analysis of the following argument. In doing so,

- Number the premises and the conclusion. Articulate each premise and the conclusion in no more than one sentence. Feel free to use a different wording in your statement of the premises and conclusion than is provided by the text. You may not need to use every sentence in the passage in reconstructing the argument, and you may need to supply premises that are not explicitly stated in the text given.
- Indicate for each premise whether it is an assumption, or whether it is supposed to follow from earlier premises. (This should appear in parentheses after the premise.)
- After stating the argument, briefly explain it in your own words, and then comment on its cogency: Are its premises plausible? Are the inferences sound? (If not, why not?)

In considering whether the concept of *rational desire satisfaction* captures what it is for something to be good, Brandt considers the following argument (p. 634):

...if we want to desire and act with reason, we want to know what is a rational desire — one that is maximally criticized by facts and logic. When we have identified a rational desire, we have that: a desire in which all the changes confrontation with available information will bring have been wrought. If we are dedicated to rational desiring and acting, we have what we want. If the term 'good' does not refer to what is rationally desired, so much the worse for the concept of the 'good'.

Brandt goes on to suggest that 'good' and 'rationally desired' do not *mean the same thing*, but that 'rationally desired' captures what we're really after in trying to understand what goodness is. Explicate the argument in the paragraph for this conclusion.

DUE DATE: In your discussion section Friday Sept 22. Give your completed exercise to your teaching assistant. Late papers will be penalized.